CLEAN VERSION OF ABSTRACT

The Abstract has been amended as follows:

For encoding a source sequence of symbols ($\underline{u}$) as an encoded sequence, the source sequence ($\underline{u}$) is divided into p_1 first sub-sequences ($\underline{U}_i$), p_1 being a positive integer, and each of the first sub-sequences ($\underline{U}_i$) is encoded in a first circular convolutional encoding method. The source sequence ($\underline{u}$) is interleaved into an interleaved sequence ($\underline{u}^*$), and the interleaved sequence ($\underline{u}^*$) is divided into p_2 second sub-sequences ($\underline{U}'_i$), p_2 being a positive integer. Each of the second sub-sequences ($\underline{U}'_i$) is encoded in a second circular convolutional encoding method. At least one of the integers p_1 and p_2 is strictly greater than 1 and at least one of the first sub-sequences ($\underline{U}_i$) is not interleaved into any of the second sub-sequences ($\underline{U}'_j$).

(It is noted that the above underlining of the following symbols is original, and is meant to be permanent: $\underline{u}$, $\underline{U}_i$, $\underline{u}^*$, $\underline{U}'_i$, $\underline{U}'_j$)